

LITTLE THINGS THAT HAVE MADE FORTUNES

Simple Toys and Puzzles Have Brought Millions to Their Inventors—Some of the Greatest Discoveries Made Purely Through Accident—Edison and the Phonograph.

"There's millions in it."

The man or woman who conceives an idea that is patentable almost invariably has visions of immense wealth, but how often the dream is realized may be found by consulting the patent office authorities, the men who handle thousands and thousands of these "children of the brain" that never bring to their inventors even the amount of money necessary for getting them patented. But, on the other hand, there are a great many patents that have made their originators immensely wealthy, and famous as well.

One would naturally suppose that the greatest returns would be from the large affairs, such as the electric railroad, the telephone and the telegraph, but such is not the case, for the small household inventions, mechanical toys and puzzles have given quicker returns and greater profits for the money expended than any of the larger affairs.

At some time or another in life everybody has turned his mind to getting out a patent, and the usual cry has been, when one man succeeded in amassing a fortune, that he had luck. Luck never enters into the patent business, except in so far as one invents something at the time that something is wanted by the buying public. The man who invented "Pigs in Clover" happened to strike the public fancy, and millions of people all over the country were chasing the little marbles into the middle pen. That man made millions on his simple puzzle because he launched it at the right time.

Inventors Do Not All Die Poor.

The rewards gained by inventions in the past 50 years have been far in excess of those that accrued to the earlier inventor, although the general public has believed that the great majority of inventors either die in the poorhouse or the insane asylum. This impression was due partly to the fact that Whitney, who invented the cotton gin; Goodyear, who first vulcanized rubber; and Morse, the father of the telegraph, all died poor, and derived no benefits from their inventions.

Naturally, when a great invention is put upon the market the inventor is exploited in all the newspapers and magazines, but when some little trifle is brought out there is hardly any notice taken of the man himself or what he has given to the world, but it is just such little things that have been, if not the source, the start of great fortunes.

J. W. McGill in 1867 invented the little metal paper fastener without which no office is now considered complete, and though but a trifle it made wealth for its inventor. Such a little thing as the rubber tip on a pencil brought \$200,000 to its inventor, Hymen L. Lipman, and that small piece of metal which you wear on the heel of your shoe to protect it had made up to 1887 over \$1,000,000 for its projector.

A man named Canfield first hit up-



Was Serving His Fourth Term for Burglary When the Idea Was Perfected.

on the notion of making arm-pit shields seamless with a sheet of cloth-covered rubber, and it brought him an income of many thousands a year. The man who invented the metal fastenings for buttons must have been a bachelor, for it did away with sewing but it made him a millionaire.

The Barbed Wire Fence.

The barbed wire fence, about which many have said unkind things as they disentangled themselves, was worth over \$1,500,000 in royalties to the originator. A countryman, whose loss from eggs being broken on their way

to market was a serious thing evolved the idea of packing them in separate compartments, and this simple device is now used altogether, and the countryman is not obliged to toil for his daily bread.

It must not be thought from this that the field of invention is occupied entirely by man, for it is not. Woman has entered into competition with him in this field, also, and some of her patents have been as useful and as good money-makers as those belonging to the sterner sex. Inventions by women cover all the branches of life, and, strange to say, quite as many patents are granted them for improved machinery as for articles of woman's wear.

The first patent ever granted to a woman in the United States was for a machine for the weaving of straw with silk or thread, and this was patented in 1809 by Mary Kies. Mary Jane Montgomery invented the mowing machine, and in 1866 she took out a patent on a machine for punching holes in corrugated metal. Her many inventions netted her a considerable fortune, as fortunes went in those days. A woman in California made over \$50,000 from her invention of the baby carriage, and a woman in Washington, Mrs. Johnson, made a good thing out of the invention of the ice-cream freezer, for before that time all cream was stirred with a spoon until it was frozen.

Criminals as Great Inventors.

Criminals have played an important part in some of the world's greatest inventions, and some have made small fortunes out of their discoveries. Charles Flier, who devised the new lock-stitch sewing machine, was serving his fourth term for burglary when the idea was perfected. When he was released his idea was backed by some capitalists, and he was given a salary of \$5,000 a year to superintend the construction of the machines, in addition to a royalty. At the same time he sold his English rights for \$50,000.



Suddenly There Was a Brilliant Burst of Flame.

cash and \$25,000 worth of stock of the English company.

The discovery of thermite has helped science and mechanics to such an extent that one steel manufacturer remarked that it would, when in general use, decrease the cost of steel ships one-third, yet the inventor was Fritz von Schmidt, known to the European police as "Count Ether," because he was a scientist who, when wanted for a burglary, always vanished as quickly as that volatile spirit. Von Schmidt was discovered by his efforts to patent his invention. He explained to a patent agent in Berlin what his patent would do, and offered to make his way into the attorney's safe, but the attorney called up the police instead.

Acetylene gas, one of the most important industrial inventions of the last decade, was stumbled upon by accident by a man named Wilson, who had an electrical furnace in North Carolina for metallurgical purposes. From time to time he used a great deal of rock salt in his furnace stock, and also limestone as a flux. When ever these two materials were fused together, as he noticed after a while, the slag produced by the intense electrical heat included a dirty grayish substance wholly unlike anything he had ever seen.

Discovered Acetylene Gas.

For weeks he noticed this substance, without giving more than a passing thought to it, and continued to dump it into the river upon the banks of which he had built his furnace. Soon

the pile of slag was so high that the top reached above the water, and then a curious thing occurred. The water would sizzle and steam as the slag was dumped in, but this day, as the last of the slag was poured onto the little island, some of it remained red hot. Suddenly there was a brilliant burst of flame, so prolonged and so hot that there was danger of the furnace catching fire.

Then Wilson began to think. The next day he took some of the curious looking substance and wet it with water, but, much to his surprise, nothing came of it. Then he struck a match and held it near the mixture, and immediately a bright flame was produced and Wilson knew that he had discovered something valuable. His discovery was acetylene gas, and he made a fortune out of it.

A German manufacturer of nitroglycerin was the inventor of dynamite, but was not seeking for it at the time he received proof of its explosive qualities. Nitroglycerin is a liquid which will not explode, but will burn rather with a steady flame, when fire is applied. One day the manufacturer spilled some of the stuff on the floor, and a little later dropped a lighted match in the same place. The explosion which followed was astonishing and quite a little disconcerting, but he had discovered dynamite, and his fortune was made. While nitroglycerin will not explode while in liquid form, it becomes explosive the instant the particles are separated so that each has sufficient air about it. This fluid vaporizes whenever sufficiently shocked, and is then so inflammable that the mere heat of the shock sets it off. The name of the German who spilled his nitroglycerin was Nobel, and he



Evolved the Idea of Packing Them in Separate Compartments.

patented the combination and became immensely wealthy.

Edison and the Phonograph.

The greatest of our inventors, Thomas A. Edison, owes his invention of the phonograph partly to an accident. Edison had been working night and day to perfect the telephone, and had constructed a number of small sheepskin drumheads, to test their value as diaphragms as compared with metal and other substances. To some of these sheepskin diaphragms he had attached a magnetic needle which was intended to project toward the magnet and assist in conveying the vibration caused by the human voice.

These did not fulfill Edison's expectations, and were discarded as useless. His assistants soon discovered that by holding the drumheads close to the mouth and making a guttural sound, a noise approaching music could be secured, much the same as when a piece of paper is wrapped around a comb. In attempting to playfully stop one of the men from playing on it, Edison touched the little needle, but no sooner had he done so than he gave one of his characteristic starts and requested the operator to repeat the performance. It was repeated, and again he touched the needle, with evident delight. He went among his assistants, asking them to hum, sing and talk against the little drumhead, he keeping his finger ever so lightly on the little needle.

"I have it!" he suddenly exclaimed, and retreated to his office and commenced drawing diagrams for new machinery, which his assistants speedily made, and a few days later the first phonograph was put together. It was a crude affair, the pin making an impression on wax. It talked imperfectly, but it showed Edison that he was on the right track, and he rapidly improved it, until now it is almost perfection. The phonograph was at first regarded as a mere toy, but later it was sold for \$1,000,000.

Millions in Air-Brake.

The inventor of the air-brake, George Westinghouse, is one of the best known inventors of the present day, but it was a long time before he could get any moneyed men interested enough in his air-brake to back him. Perhaps the one thing in his life that McKee Rankin regretted was that when Westinghouse offered him a half interest in the air-brake for \$500 he did not accept it. This invention netted Mr. Westinghouse many millions of dollars and brought him world-wide fame.

BASEBALL NOTES

NATIONAL LEAGUE NEWS.

"One of the worst drawbacks to baseball," says Tommy Corcoran, the Cincinnati shortstop, "is that the great majority of men who follow it know nothing else. The preliminary training of a ball player for a professional career comes in the early years of his life, when he should be qualifying



Tommy Corcoran.

himself for a business or professional calling. After he has played ten or 15 years he feels as a matter of fact he is out of the running in any other business. He may save something out of his salary, but the chances are that he will not, for as a rule ball players are improvident. So when his days of usefulness as a big leaguer are over he drifts down among the minors, where his past achievements are about all the glory he can boast of in the diamond game."

Charlie Alperman will keep himself in condition this winter shoveling coal under a boiler in a factory at Aetna, Pa.

Pittsburg has purchased the release of Abstein, a clever all-round player now with the Shreveport club. He will be assigned to utility roles.

Billy Lauer, who has been on McGraw's reserve list for several seasons, has been released to the Waterbury club of the Connecticut league.

Overall and Walsh are the only bachelors on Chicago's payroll now.

During the Phillies' exhibition game at Jamestown on August 26, Magee's Titusville friends presented him with a dress suit case.

Beltzhoover's pet, Otto Knabe, the Toledo infielder, will return to the Pittsburg fold.

There have been numerous good judges of ball players, but mighty few that were the equals of Frank Selee in that regard.

AMONG THE MINORS.

The A. J. G. club, of the New York league, has released Pitcher Villemann.

The Toronto club has signed Outfielders Medensaul and George Bannon, late of Montreal.

Pitcher Brady, of the Little Rock team, has a record of striking out 11 men. Every strike was a good healthy swing and not one had to be called by the umpire.

Bill Clingman, of the Toledo team, will retire from baseball this year, after a career on the diamond covering a period of more than 16 years.

Center Fielder Gettman is the best player on the Buffalo team. He is batting .308 and fielding .986.

was through, though he would not mind playing with that team could George Huff be induced to take the management of the club. Of this there is practically no chance, for Huff says he is thoroughly satisfied with his position at the University of Illinois.

Washington has shown flashes of first-division ability under Stahl's leadership. Each spring the club starts out and stays near the top the first month. Last season it was at the top for some time and gave promise of being in the fight for the pennant, but as the battle waxed warmer it steadily drops, and last year was no exception.

If Stahl drops the management of the Senators, there will probably be several changes in management of American league clubs before the opening of the 1907 season. Boston will see a change. Detroit is likely to on account of the friction that has been present this year, and Fielder Jones has said he will not lead the White Stockings another year, though it is that club wins the pennant he is likely to find it hard work to persuade Corniskey to permit him to drop the reins.

PERUNA PRAISED.



MRS. ESTHER M. MILNER.

Box 521, DeGraff, Ohio.
Dr. S. B. Hartman, Columbus, Ohio.

Dear Sir:—
I was a terrible sufferer from pelvic weakness and had headache continuously. I was not able to do my housework for myself and husband. I wrote you and described my condition as nearly as possible. You recommended Peruna. I took four bottles of it and was completely cured. I think Peruna a wonderful medicine and have recommended it to my friends with the very best of results.

Esther M. Milner.

Very few of the great multitude of women who have been relieved of some pelvic disease or weakness by Peruna ever consent to give a testimonial to be read by the public.

There are, however, a few courageous, self-sacrificing women who will for the sake of their suffering sisters allow their cures to be published.

Mrs. Milner is one of these. In her gratitude for her restoration to health she is willing that the women of the whole world should know it. A chronic invalid brought back to health is no small matter. Words are inadequate to express complete gratitude.

Disused Houses Cheap.

Many tourists in Switzerland were astonished this summer to see villages in the Rhone valley, near Brigue, which looked as if they had been bombarded. On inquiry they found that the demolished houses were mostly temporary boarding places for the Italian laborers who made the Simplon tunnel. After their departure these houses were offered for sale at \$50 each—not, of course, including the ground on which they stood.

The extraordinary popularity of fine white goods this summer makes the choice of Starch a matter of great importance. Defiance Starch, being free from all injurious chemicals, is the only one which is safe to use on fine fabrics. Its great strength as a stiffener makes half the usual quantity of Starch necessary, with the result of perfect finish, equal to that when the goods were new.

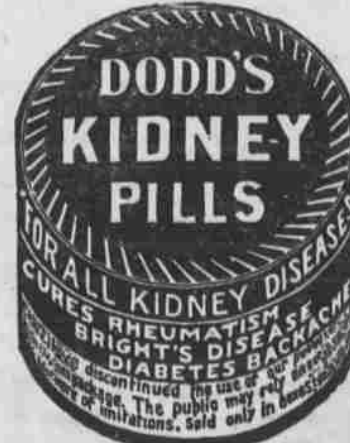
Floating Exposition.

Three hundred British firms have contributed to an exhibit of goods which is displayed on the lower decks of a former military transport, and will be sent from London to different parts of Canada, the West Indies, South America, South Africa, India, China, Japan and Australia. The voyage is expected to last 12 months.

London Policeman Runs Amuck.

During one of London's recent hot days a policeman suddenly became crazed and drew his club and charged along the sidewalk striking right and left. He had cleaned two blocks before some of his comrades caught and overpowered him.

Life often seems but a shipwreck, whose fragments are friendship, glory and love. The shores of time that we pass during our life are covered with these derelicts.—Mme. de Staël.



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